



A Membership / Social Service Agency serving the Black and Caribbean Community; providing Cultural Integration & Settlement to New Immigrants, Advocacy, Crisis Intervention, Youth and Family Services, Counselling to Women who are Survivors of Domestic Violence / Sexual Assault and Employment Preparation for Experienced Workers

PROFILE: JAMAICAN CANADIAN ASSOCIATION (JCA)

The JCA is a non-profit community-based organization committed to identifying and responding to the needs of the Caribbean/Black community. It was founded in 1962 by a group of Jamaican Canadians wanting to celebrate Jamaica's independence from Britain. Based on the requests which flooded in, it quickly grew into being not only a cultural/social organization but also a social service agency.

As a social services provider, JCA now serves approximately 26,000 clients yearly, especially youths. It provides, through its paid staff, a variety of counselling, mentoring, support, advocacy, and educational services to youths and their families, new immigrants, seniors, victims of domestic violence, prisoners, and unemployed adults. The programs are funded by the Ontario Ministries of Community and Social Services, Citizenship, Culture and Recreation; Citizenship and Immigration Canada; Department of Canadian Heritage; Toronto Community Services; and the United Way of Greater Toronto.

It has been up to the volunteer Board and members of the JCA, however, to provide the building to house the social service programs, as well as the social/cultural/educational/recreational ones for youths, members, and supporters. The 995 Arrow Road community centre is the third and largest building that has been owned by the association over the years.

The property was purchased in March 1996 and renovations were completed in July 1999. The building is situated on a 1.066-acre site and houses two banquet halls (one doubles as a recreation hall for youths); a members' lounge; staff, volunteer, and rented offices; meeting rooms; a computer room; and a classroom.

Of necessity, various committees of the association carry out a number of fund-raising activities each year; no level of government and no foundation have yet contributed to our capital costs. The JCA's short-range goal is to raise one million dollars to pay on the building; the long-range goal is to raise another two million to set up two endowment funds for building maintenance and for the expansion and delivery of programs.